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STEP Project Category: Internship
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

My Second-Year Transformation Experience Program (STEP) project occurred at Grant Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio from May to August 2019. Throughout these summer months, I used the money allotted by STEP to remain in Columbus so that I could explore varying careers in medicine. I'd always known I wanted to pursue a career in medicine, but there are many jobs to be filled in healthcare, and I did not know which was the best fit for me. Working as a patient support assistant, I followed orders given by both nurses and physicians to provide patient care. I began to understand the role of the nurse better through working alongside them. Furthermore, I learned more about the jobs of certified nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, respiratory therapists, and physicians. I was able to shadow physician's assistants in different departments, such as cardiothoracic, orthopedics, and neurosurgery. It was through these interaction that my love for medicine strengthened, and how I found that I aspire to become a physician's assistant in surgery.



WHAT WAS TRANSFORMATION?

- My project challenged me to be immersed in varying parts of the medical field, giving me a better understanding of different roles in healthcare.
- I worked as a patient support assistant over the summer, where I followed the orders of nurses and physicians to provide care to patients.
- I worked alongside the nurses on a critical and intermediate care unit, where they taught me many useful things about medicine and its applications.
- I was able to talk with the respiratory therapists at the hospital and learned more about what they do and how they assist patients.
- I shadowed physician's assistants through different departments including cardiothoracic, orthopedics, and neurosurgery.
- Each interaction strengthened my love of medicine and validated that I belonged in the field.
- I ultimately discovered I want to become a physician's assistant in the surgical field.

4 EAST
Intermediate and Critical Care



AN IMPORTANT INSTANCE

Please note: medically graphic content

One of the most transformational instances for me came just a few days after I started working on the unit. We are a critical and intermediate care unit, so the patients we see are not generally stable. One of my first nights on my own, I had a patient two nights in a row. I walked into his room on my second night to get his temperature, and I noticed that he was acting strangely. He was speaking slowly and less coherently than he had the night before. I approached the nurse and explained my concerns to her. She examined the patient and came to me shortly after agreeing that the patient was acting differently. She said she would speak to the doctor over the phone and we would continue to watch the patient closely. Roughly twenty minutes later, I was in another patient's room when I heard an announcement over the main speaker: "Code Blue!" My patient had gone into cardiac arrest; his heart had stopped. My nurse and I ran in the room as quickly as we could. I immediately started chest compressions as the rapid-response team rushed to the bedside. Once I had stepped away from the bed and another person began chest compressions, I heard my nurse tell me to get the patient's blood sugar and the intubation equipment. Without hesitation, I did just that. After a twenty-minute code that felt like hours, we were able to find a steady heartbeat. There was another problem, though. The patient's brain had swelled so much that if pressure weren't relieved immediately, they would go into cardiac arrest again. The doctors had to put holes in the patient's skull at the bedside in order to save his life. He was moved to the intensive care unit as soon as he was stable enough. In the moments after the team left, I couldn't help but reflect on the events that had just passed. I had played a key role in saving someone's life. I had alerted the nurse to the patient's odd behavior, I had performed chest compressions, and I had run to provide valuable tools. It was in the quiet moments when I was staring at the empty room that I knew for certain that I belonged in healthcare.



WHAT MOTIVATED ME TO DO THIS PROJECT?

- I always knew I wanted to go into medicine, but there are many careers to pursue in the medical field, and all have varying responsibilities.
- I grew up in a small town with limited options to explore different areas of medicine.
- Medicine has been a big part of my life; my mother, grandmothers, and uncle all work in healthcare and have influenced my choice to pursue a hospital job through stories and shared experiences.
- Living in Columbus over the summer gave me the opportunity to work and shadow in a large network of hospitals with a diverse array of healthcare positions.
- I designed this project as a way to explore different positions in the medical field and gain a better understanding of what the roles and responsibilities of these positions entails.

WHAT DID I LEARN?

- I explored different jobs in the hospital and ultimately decided I like the role and responsibilities of the physician's assistant.
- I got to see surgeries on the brain, spinal cord, and hip. These piqued my love of surgery.
- I've learned much about the application of medicine from the nurses I've worked with at Grant Medical Center.
 - The group picture below is of some of the critical care nurses on 4 East learning about Prisma. This is used for patients that need continuous dialysis. These nurses later taught me about it, too.
- I've learned how to think rationally in medically intense situations.
- I've learned what some medical conditions look like, and what medications might be given for varying conditions.
- I've learned the value of having a caring team in healthcare; some shifts are very hard to get through and it is invaluable to have people to help you persevere.



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Second-year Transformational
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